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NEWS RELEASE

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METHAMPHETAMINE AWARENESS STRESSED BY STATE LEADERS DURING
National Methamphetamine Awareness Day

Sacramento, Calif.--- Speaking during National Methamphetamine Awareness Day, national and state officials from law enforcement and drug treatment agencies called on increased awareness about methamphetamine and said that production, distribution and abuse remain a problem in the state.

"Methamphetamine is a highly addictive and destructive drug," said U.S. Attorney McGregor W. Scott during a press conference. "It is vital that we get the word out, particularly to the youngest in our communities. Our best chance of success at curbing methamphetamine abuse is collaboration among prevention, treatment, and enforcement agencies."

"Methamphetamine imposes a heavy price on the health of our children, families, and environment by fueling criminal behavior," said California Attorney General Bill Lockyer. "This highly addictive drug destroys the lives of all those who come in contact with it. It is my hope, through National Methamphetamine Awareness Day, we can help reduce its impact by spreading the word about this dangerous drug."

According to the latest treatment statistics from the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP), there were more than 75,000 admissions in 2004-2005 for methamphetamine addiction.

Methamphetamine abuse disproportionately affects women with 57% reporting methamphetamine as their drug of abuse while 43% of men report methamphetamine addiction. Whites account for 60% of methamphetamine admissions followed by Hispanics at 25%, and American Indians, Asian/Pacific Islanders and African Americans each at roughly 4%. More than half of the individuals admitted to treatment for methamphetamine addiction are between the ages of 21 and 35. Smoking is the most common route of administration at 70% , followed by inhaling and injection at 15% and 12% respectively.

“Today in California, one in three admissions to publicly funded treatment are for methamphetamine addiction; California has the largest methamphetamine treatment population in the nation,” said Kathryn P. Jett, director of ADP. It is important that we lead in both education and prevention.”

Earlier this year, ADP began the California Methamphetamine Initiative (CMI) to address the growing number of treatment admissions for methamphetamine addiction. The CMI includes a prevention campaign a Practitioners’ Reference Guide for state treatment providers containing timely information on best treatment practices and collaborative effort with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

In June, Governor Schwarzenegger signed a budget that included \$10 million for the methamphetamine prevention campaign and more than \$35 million for law enforcement efforts.

One of the law enforcement programs is the California Multi-Jurisdictional Methamphetamine Enforcement Team (CAL-MMET) which is run out of the Office of Emergency Services (OES).

“The CAL-MMET program strengthens law enforcement efforts to disrupt methamphetamine production and distribution by offering additional resources and support to teams who specialize in methamphetamine offenses,” said John Isaacson, chief of the crime suppression section at OES.

In 2005/06, CAL-MMET produced 955 methamphetamine related arrests, cleaned up or mitigated 99 sites, seized nearly \$7 million in assets.

The Department of Justice oversees the California Methamphetamine Strategy or CALMS program which supports the Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement Program to address the developing trends and techniques involved in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

“We’ve made progress in the fight against methamphetamine but there is no question we can do more,” said McGregor Scott. “Methamphetamine negatively impacts communities and it tears apart families and it will require not only state and federal action but community support as well.”

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